

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD: THE BEST RULE OF A HOLY LIFE

BY BROTHER LAWRENCE.

This book is an update of the book
“Being Conversations and Letters of Nicholas Herman, of
Lorraine (Brother Lawrence)”. Translated from the French.
by Robert Edmonson.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY,
NEW YORK. CHICAGO. TORONTO 1895

This version is updated, illustrated, and annotated
(with references and songs) by Dr. Curtis Sergeant, 2025.



ORIGINAL PREFACE

This book consists of notes of several conversations had with, and letters written by Nicholas Herman, of Lorraine, a lowly and unlearned man, who, after having been a footman and soldier, was admitted a Lay Brother among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris in 1666, and was afterwards known as "Brother Lawrence."

His conversion, which took place when he was about eighteen years old, was the result, under God, of the mere sight in midwinter, of a dry and leafless tree, and of the reflections it stirred respecting the change the coming spring would bring. From that time he grew eminently in the knowledge and love of GOD, endeavoring constantly to walk "_as in His presence_." No wilderness wanderings seem to have intervened between the Red Sea and the Jordan of his experience. A wholly consecrated man, he lived his Christian life through as a pilgrim—as a steward and not as an owner, and died at the age of eighty, leaving a name which has been as "ointment poured forth."

The "Conversations" are supposed to have been written by M. Beaufort, Grand Vicar to M. de Chalons, formerly Cardinal de Noailles, by whose recommendation the letters were first published.

The book has, within a short time, gone through repeated English and American editions, and has been a means of blessing to many souls. It contains very much of that wisdom which only lips the Lord has touched can express, and which only hearts He has made teachable can receive.

May this edition also be blessed by GOD, and redound to the praise of the glory of His grace.

PREFACE

I first encountered *The Practice of the Presence of God* as a young man. I immediately recognized the importance of its main idea, but unfortunately, my progress in applying it to my life was slow. I do not claim to have mastered it yet, but I can certainly say that I have made progress in doing so. One thing has not changed: I continue to recognize the importance of practicing the presence of God.

I find much to commend this book, but I fear that the archaic language in many of the available translations will deter many modern followers of Christ. To that end, I am updating the language. I have also taken the liberty of adding some Scripture references relevant to each of the conversations and letters it contains. I am also adding some period-appropriate illustrations to add a sense of connection. Finally, I have written songs to expand or illustrate the ideas in each section. You can find these at: <https://archive.org/details/practice-of-the-presence-of-God-songs>



There are some references to theological matters I disagree with, although they are not directly related to the main idea of the book. These are mostly in the conversation section and include references to “confessors”, “mortifications”, and “penance”. All of these reflect differences between the author’s era of Catholicism and my context of present-day Protestantism related to the conception of the priesthood and of how grace is received or how we have access to the Lord. Do not be distracted by those minor references.

I have produced a phone app that is designed to help people learn how to hear God more clearly and to converse with him more regularly. It is called *Hupakouo* and is available on Google Play and in the App Store.

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CONVERSATIONS

FIRST CONVERSATION

The first time I met Brother Lawrence was on August 3, 1666. He told me that God had shown him a great mercy in his conversion when he was eighteen years old.

During the winter, while looking at a tree stripped bare of its leaves, he considered how, before long, the leaves would return, and afterward flowers and fruit would appear. In that moment, God gave him a profound awareness of His providence and power, an impression that was never erased from his soul. This glimpse of God's majesty broke his attachment to the world and kindled in him such a love for God that he could not say if it had even increased in the more than forty years since.

He explained that he had once served as a footman for Monsieur Fieubert, the treasurer, though he was such a clumsy fellow that he constantly broke things. Desiring to be accepted into a monastery, he thought that there he would be disciplined for his awkwardness and failures, and in that way, he could offer to God his life and its pleasures as a sacrifice. But God had another plan. Instead of hardship, he found great satisfaction in the monastic life.

He said that we must learn to live always aware of God's presence, continually conversing with Him. It is shameful, he said, to leave His fellowship to dwell on trivial or foolish things.

We ought to nourish our souls with great and lofty thoughts of God, for such meditation brings joy to a heart devoted to Him.

He urged us to stir up our faith, for it is sorrowful that we have so little of it. Instead of living by faith, people often distract themselves with minor devotions that change daily. But faith, he said, is the very spirit of the Church, and it is enough to bring us to great maturity in Christ.

We must surrender ourselves fully to God in both temporal and spiritual matters, seeking our satisfaction only by doing His will, whether He leads us by suffering or comfort. To a heart truly yielded, both are alike. He explained that when God allows us to feel dryness, weariness, or difficulty in prayer, it tests our love for Him. In those times, we must respond with genuine acts of surrender, for even one such act may significantly advance our walk with God.

He was never surprised by the sins and evils he heard about daily in the world. On the contrary, he said he was amazed there were not more, given people's capacity for wickedness. He prayed for sinners, but he also trusted that since God can put an end to their evil whenever He chooses, he had no need to be overly troubled by it.

To reach the kind of surrender that God desires, he said, we must watch carefully over our passions, whether in spiritual matters or earthly ones. God gives light to those who truly desire to serve Him. And if I sincerely wanted to serve God, he said, I could visit him as often as I wished without fear of being a burden—but if not, then I ought not to come at all.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 16:11 – "You will make known to me the way of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – "Pray without ceasing."
- Hebrews 11:6 – "Now without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him."
- Romans 12:1 – "Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."
- James 4:7 – "Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you."



Always in His Presence

[Verse 1]

A barren tree in winter's cold,
New life unseen, a truth untold.
The leaves will come, the fruit will show,
God's hand of power makes all things grow.

[Chorus]

Always in His presence, walking side by side,
Speaking to my Savior, with nothing left to hide.
Whether joy or sorrow, comfort or the test,
I will rest surrendered, knowing He knows best.

[Verse 2]

The world may call with fleeting gain,
But love for God breaks every chain.
Faith, not sight, must guide my way,
Each act of trust brings brighter day.

[Chorus]

Always in His presence, walking side by side,
Speaking to my Savior, with nothing left to hide.
Whether joy or sorrow, comfort or the test,
I will rest surrendered, knowing He knows best.

[Bridge]

In prayer's dry season, when silence seems to fall,
One act of yielding can conquer all.
The heart resigned, His will embraced,
Finds in His presence unending grace.

[Final Chorus]

Always in His presence, walking side by side,
Speaking to my Savior, with nothing left to hide.
Whether joy or sorrow, comfort or the test,
I will rest surrendered, knowing He knows best.

SECOND CONVERSATION

He explained that he had always been guided by love, without selfish motives. Having resolved to make the love of God the goal of all his actions, he was well content with this way of life. Even the smallest act, like picking up a straw from the ground, he was pleased to do for love of God, seeking Him alone, not His gifts.

For many years, however, he had been deeply troubled in spirit. He was convinced he would be condemned, and no one in the world could persuade him otherwise. Yet he reasoned with himself: *I entered the religious life for the love of God alone, and I have sought to act only for Him. Whatever becomes of me—whether lost or saved—I will still act purely for the love of God. If nothing else, I shall at least have lived to love Him until my dying breath.* This struggle lasted four years, bringing him much suffering. But at last he saw that his turmoil came from lack of faith. Since then, he had lived in freedom and continual joy. He placed his sins between himself and God, as if to remind the Lord that he did not deserve His favors—yet God continued to pour out blessings in abundance.

He said we must first apply ourselves with diligence to form a habit of continually conversing with God and referring everything to Him. Soon, however, love itself will stir us inwardly to this practice without effort.

After enjoying so many pleasant days from God, he expected his share of suffering. Yet he was not anxious about it, knowing that he could do nothing of himself, and trusting that God would not fail to give him strength to endure.

When opportunities arose to practice virtue, he prayed: *Lord, I cannot do this unless You enable me.* Then he always found strength more than sufficient.

When he failed in duty, he simply confessed to God, saying: *I will always fail if You leave me to myself. It is You who must keep me from falling and mend what is broken.* After such a confession, he left the matter with God and moved on without distress.

He believed we ought to deal with God simply—speaking to Him plainly, asking His help in daily matters as they arise. He testified that God never failed to provide.

He recalled being sent to Burgundy to purchase wine for the community, a task he dreaded because of his lameness and dislike for business. He could only move about the boat by rolling over the barrels. Yet he did not trouble himself, saying to God: *This is Your business I am about.* And the matter turned out well. The year before, he had been sent to Auvergne for the same purpose, and though he could not say how, it too had gone well.

Likewise, in his kitchen duties—which he naturally disliked—he had trained himself to do everything for the love of God and with prayer for grace to do his work well. In this way, he had found the labor easy, even after fifteen years of service there.

Though content with his current post, he was as ready to leave it as the last, always content to serve God in whatever condition, even by doing the most minor tasks for His love.

He said the appointed prayer times were no different to him from any other time. He withdrew to pray only as his

Superior directed, not because he needed to, for even his busiest work did not distract him from God.

Knowing his obligation to love God in all things, and striving to do so, he had no need of a spiritual director to advise him—only a confessor to absolve him. He was well aware of his faults but not discouraged by them. He confessed them to God without excuse, then returned to his usual practice of love and adoration.

During his earlier mental struggles, he consulted no one. By faith, he knew that God was present, and so he resolved to direct all his actions to Him, desiring only to please Him, no matter what came of it.

He warned that useless thoughts spoil everything. The trouble begins there. We must reject them as soon as we recognize their irrelevance and return to communion with God.

Initially, he often spent his prayer time fighting wandering thoughts and slipping back into them. He could never keep his devotion regulated by formal methods. Though he once practiced meditation, that habit eventually faded, though he could not say how.

He said all bodily mortifications and outward practices are worthless unless they serve the purpose of drawing us into union with God by love. He had considered this well and found that the shortest way was to go straight to God by continual acts of love, doing everything for His sake.

We should distinguish between acts of the mind and acts of the will. The former are of little worth compared to the latter, which are everything. Our only true business is to love God and delight in Him.

All the mortifications in the world, if they lack the love of God, cannot erase even a single sin. Instead, we must calmly wait for pardon through the blood of Christ, seeking only to love Him with all our hearts. God seems to have given His greatest mercies to the greatest sinners, so that His compassion might shine all the brighter.

He concluded that the greatest pains and pleasures of this world are nothing compared with what he had experienced spiritually. Because of this, he no longer feared or worried about anything. His one prayer was only that he might never offend God.

He said he had no scruples, for when he failed in duty, he freely admitted it: *I am accustomed to do so; I will never do otherwise if I am left to myself.* And when he did not fail, he thanked God, confessing that the strength had come from Him.

Additional Bible References

- Colossians 3:23 – "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord and not for people."
- Philippians 4:13 – "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
- 1 John 4:18 – "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love."
- John 15:5 – "I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

- Ephesians 2:8–9 – "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast."



All for Love of God

[Verse 1]

Even in fear, my heart will stay,
To love You, Lord, in night or day.
Whatever comes—salvation or loss,
My joy is found beneath the cross.

[Chorus]

All for love of God, my strength, my song,
Through every trial, You make me strong.
In every task, both great and small,
I do it for the Lord of all.

[Verse 2]

In kitchen heat or merchant's trade,
Your presence shines, I'm not afraid.
Each prayer is plain, each word sincere,
For You, O Lord, are always near.

[Chorus]

All for love of God, my strength, my song,
Through every trial, You make me strong.
In every task, both great and small,
I do it for the Lord of all.

[Bridge]

Not works, not pain, not acts of will,
But love of God sustains me still.
Your mercy flows, my sins erased,
My heart forever sings Your praise.

[Final Chorus]

All for love of God, my strength, my song,
Through every trial, You make me strong.
In every task, both great and small,
I do it for the Lord of all.

THIRD CONVERSATION

He said that the foundation of his spiritual life had been a lofty view and profound esteem of God in faith. Once he had grasped this truth, his chief care was to reject every other thought so that he might do all things for the love of God.

If he sometimes went for a while without thinking of God, he did not trouble himself over it. Instead, he would humbly confess his weakness to God, and then return to Him with even greater trust—knowing that his forgetfulness only proved his need of God all the more.

He believed that our trust in God brings Him great honor and draws down abundant grace.

It is impossible, he said, not only for God to deceive us, but also for Him to leave a soul long in suffering when it is fully surrendered to Him and willing to endure everything for His sake.

He testified that he had often experienced God's quick help by divine grace in every situation. From this, he learned not to plan his work ahead of time. Instead, when the moment came, he looked to God as to a clear mirror and found exactly what was fitting for him to do. In earlier years, he had tried to anticipate his duties, but once he learned this way of reliance, he found it better to trust God moment by moment.

When outward business distracted him from thoughts of God, a fresh sense of God's presence would suddenly fill his soul, so powerfully that he could hardly contain himself.

He felt more closely united with God in his outward tasks than when he withdrew from them for private devotion.

Looking ahead, he expected God to give him some great suffering of body or mind. The worst he could imagine would be to lose the sense of God's presence, which he had so long enjoyed. But even then, he trusted God's goodness not to abandon him, and to give him strength to bear whatever trials He permitted. Because of this, he feared nothing and did not seek counsel about his state. Whenever he had tried to do so, he left more troubled than before. Being ready, as he believed, to lay down his life for the love of God, he had no fear. He was persuaded that perfect surrender to God is the sure road to heaven, a path where God always provides sufficient light for our steps.

In the beginning of the spiritual life, he said, we must be faithful in duty and self-denial. After that, indescribable joys will follow. In every difficulty, we need only turn to Jesus Christ and ask His grace, and all things become easy.

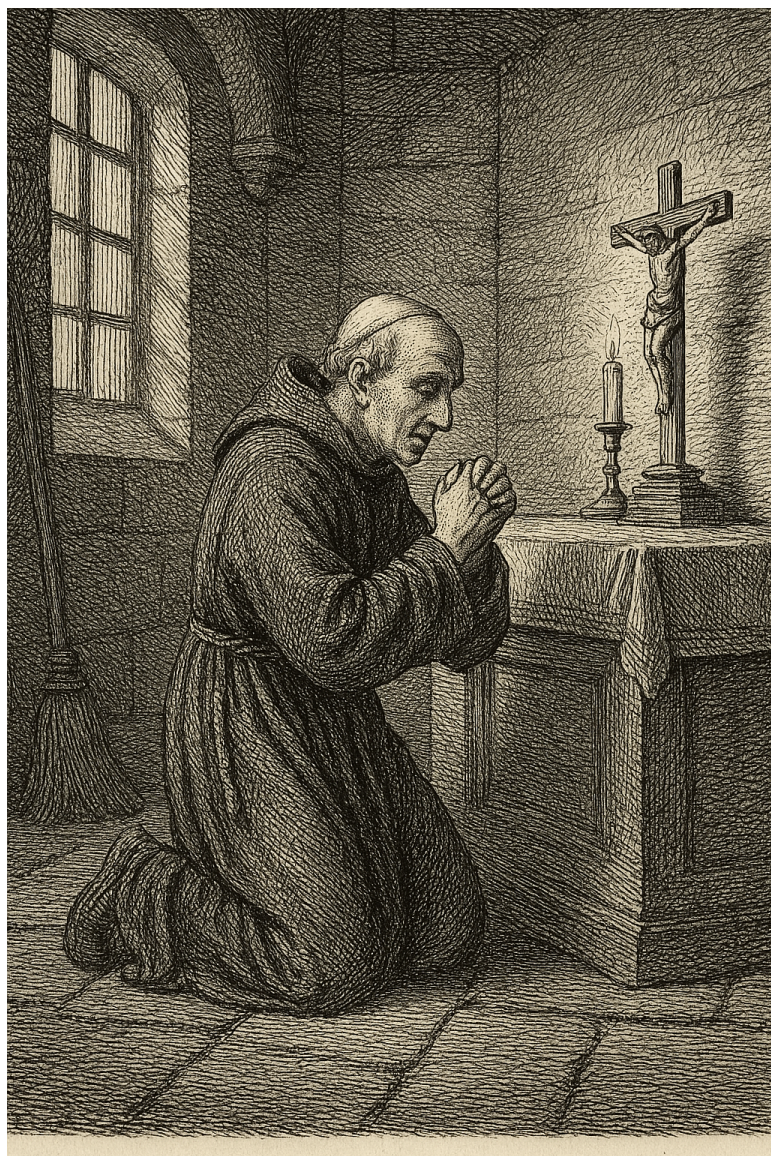
He observed that many Christians fail to make progress because they remain stuck in outward penances and exercises, neglecting the love of God, which is the true goal. This is evident in their works and explains why so little genuine virtue is seen.

To come to God requires neither learning nor skill, but only a heart determined to seek nothing but Him, to act only for His sake, and to love Him above all.

Additional Bible References

- Jeremiah 29:13 – "And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

- Isaiah 26:3 – "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You."
- Psalm 37:5 – "Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it."
- Matthew 11:28–29 – "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
- John 14:27 – "Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful."



The Sure Road of Love

[Verse 1]

A heart once fixed on God above,
Found every step was filled with love.
No art, no wisdom, none but this—
To walk with Him, our truest bliss.

[Chorus]

The sure road of love, the path of light,
Day by day, His grace our sight.
No fear, no shame, no worldly prize,
But Christ our joy, our only prize.

[Verse 2]

In work or prayer, His presence near,
A sudden flame, His voice so clear.
Through trial's weight or sorrow's night,
His strength within makes burdens light.

[Chorus]

The sure road of love, the path of light,
Day by day, His grace our sight.
No fear, no shame, no worldly prize,
But Christ our joy, our only prize.

[Bridge]

Not penance cold, nor works alone,
But love that flows before His throne.
The faithful heart, surrendered whole,
Finds heaven's peace within the soul.

[Final Chorus]

The sure road of love, the path of light,
Day by day, His grace our sight.
No fear, no shame, no worldly prize,
But Christ our joy, our only prize.

FOURTH CONVERSATION

He often spoke to me openly about his way of approaching God, some of which I have already related.

He said everything depends upon one wholehearted renunciation of whatever we know does not lead us to God. We must accustom ourselves to continual conversation with Him, marked by freedom and simplicity. All we need is to recognize God as present with us, to turn to Him every moment, asking His help to know His will in doubtful matters and to carry out what He clearly requires. We should offer each task to Him before we begin it, and thank Him when it is finished.

In this continual fellowship, we praise, adore, and love Him for His infinite goodness and perfection.

We must not be discouraged by our sins but pray for His grace with full confidence, relying on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. God never fails to offer His grace in each action. He said he perceived it clearly and only missed it when his thoughts wandered from God's presence or when he forgot to ask for help.

God always gives light in our doubts, provided we sincerely seek only to please Him.

Our sanctification, he said, does not come from changing the type of work we do, but from doing what we already do — yet doing it for God's sake rather than our own. It is sad, he observed, that so many people mistake the means for the end, clinging to particular practices but doing them poorly because of selfish motives.

The best way of going to God, he said, is to carry on our everyday business without any desire to please men, but purely for the love of God.

It is a great delusion, he added, to think that prayer times differ from other times. We are just as bound to cling to God in action as in prayer.

For him, prayer was nothing but a sense of God's presence, with his soul at that time insensible to anything but divine love. When the appointed prayer times ended, he felt no change, for he continued with God, praising and blessing Him with all his might. Thus, he passed his life in continual joy, yet still hoped God would give him something to suffer when he grew stronger.

We must once and for all put our whole trust in God, totally surrendering ourselves, assured that He will not deceive us.

We should not tire of doing little things for the love of God, for He values not the greatness of the task but the love with which it is done. We should not be surprised if at first we fail often, for eventually the habit will form, and love will naturally move us to acts of devotion with delight.

He said the whole essence of religion is faith, hope, and love. These are what join us to God's will. Everything else is secondary, to be used only as a means to the true end: being united with Him.

“All things are possible,” he said, “to the one who believes; less difficult to the one who hopes; easier still to the one who loves; and easiest to the one who perseveres in all three.”

The goal we ought to set before ourselves is to become, in this life, the most perfect worshippers of God that we can be, as we hope to be for all eternity.

He advised that when we begin the spiritual life, we should examine ourselves to the depths, and there discover how unworthy we are of the name of Christian. We are subject to endless troubles, sicknesses, moods, and both inward and outward struggles. God humbles us with pains and labors, and we should not be surprised when trials, temptations, and opposition arise from others. Instead, we should accept them as long as God permits, for they greatly benefit us.

The greater perfection a soul seeks, the more dependent it becomes upon divine grace.

When a fellow brother asked him how he had attained such a habitual sense of God, he explained that from the first day he entered the monastery, he resolved to make God the end of all his thoughts and desires.

During his novitiate, during the hours of prayer, he thought of God to convince his mind and impress upon his heart the reality of His existence. He relied not on reasoned arguments but on faith and devotion. By this simple and sure method, he nourished himself in the knowledge and love of God, determined to live always in His presence, if possible, never forgetting Him.

When he rose from prayer, filled with thoughts of God, he went to his work in the kitchen. There, he first considered what each task required, and then spent the intervals of his time in prayer.

As he began his work, he would say with childlike trust:
“O my God, since You are with me, and I must now obey

Your commands by turning to outward things, I ask You for the grace to remain in Your presence. Prosper me by Your help, receive all my work, and possess all my affections."

As he continued, he continued his conversation with God, asking His grace and offering Him each action.

When finished, he examined how he had done. If well, he gave thanks; if poorly, he asked forgiveness and went on without discouragement, continuing as if he had never failed. "By rising after each fall," he said, "and by frequent acts of faith and love, I have come to the place where it is as difficult for me not to think of God as it once was to accustom myself to thinking of Him."

His example was as persuasive as his words. His very face shone with calm devotion, and even in the busiest moments of the kitchen, he maintained serenity. He was never hurried or idle but did each task in its time with steady composure and tranquility. "For me," he said, "the time of business does not differ from the time of prayer. While many call for different things in the clatter of my kitchen, I possess God in as much peace as if I were on my knees before the blessed sacrament."

Additional Bible References

- Colossians 3:17 – "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 – "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God."

- Romans 5:3–4 – "And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope."
- Galatians 5:6 – "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love."
- 1 Thessalonians 1:3 – "Constantly keeping in mind your work of faith and labor of love and perseverance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father."



In the Clatter of My Kitchen

[Verse 1]

Not changing tasks, but changing why,
I lift my heart to God on high.
Each little work, each humble chore,
I offer love forevermore.

[Chorus]

In the clatter of my kitchen, Lord,
I find Your peace, I hear Your word.
In prayer or work, it's all the same,
For all I do is for Your name.

[Verse 2]

When doubts arise, Your light is near,
When burdens press, Your grace appears.
Through faith and hope, through love I stand,
Upheld each day by Your own hand.

[Chorus]

In the clatter of my kitchen, Lord,
I find Your peace, I hear Your word.
In prayer or work, it's all the same,
For all I do is for Your name.

[Bridge]

When I have failed, I rise again,
Your mercy lifts me free from sin.
Till habit grows and love takes hold,
Your presence shines, my heart made bold.

[Final Chorus]

In the clatter of my kitchen, Lord,
I find Your peace, I hear Your word.
In prayer or work, it's all the same,
For all I do is for Your name.

LETTERS

FIRST LETTER



Since you have so earnestly asked me to tell you how I came to live in a habitual sense of God's presence—a gift which the Lord in His mercy has been pleased to grant me—I must admit that I reluctantly share it. It is only because of your persistence, and only on the condition that you keep this letter private. If I knew it would be shown to others, not even my deep desire for your growth in God would persuade me to write it.

Having read many books that offered different methods of drawing near to God and many various practices of the spiritual life, I found that they only confused me instead of helping me. What I longed for was simple: to become wholly God's. So I resolved to give all for the All. I gave myself entirely to God, that He might take away my sin, and I renounced, for His love, everything that was not Him. I began to live as though there were none but God and me in the world.

At times, I saw myself before Him as a guilty sinner at the feet of his Judge. At other times, I beheld Him within me as my Father and my God. As often as possible, I adored Him, keeping my mind fixed in His holy presence and recalling it whenever it wandered. This practice brought me much difficulty, yet I continued without distressing myself when my mind strayed involuntarily.

I made this my constant task, not only during the hours set aside for prayer but throughout the day, every hour, every moment—even in the middle of my work. I drove away whatever distracted me from the thought of God.

This has been my usual practice ever since I entered the religious life. Though I have done it imperfectly, I have found great blessing in it. I know these blessings are entirely due to the mercy and goodness of God, for apart from Him we can do nothing, and I, least of all. But when we faithfully keep ourselves in His holy presence, setting Him always before us, this prevents us from offending Him or willfully displeasing Him. It also gives us a sacred liberty and, if I may put it so, a familiarity with God, through which we may ask and receive the graces we need.

Over time, as these acts are repeated, they become habitual, and the sense of God's presence becomes almost natural to us. Give thanks with me, if you will, for His great goodness toward me, which I can never admire enough—for all the mercies He has shown to so miserable a sinner as I am. May all things give Him praise. Amen.

I am, in the Lord, yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 16:8 – "I have set the Lord continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."
- John 15:4 – "Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me."

- Hebrews 4:16 – "Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need."
- James 4:8 – "Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."
- Colossians 1:10 – "So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

All for the All

[Verse 1]

I laid aside what was not You,
And chose the path both straight and true.
All for the All, my life I give,
For only You are why I live.

[Chorus]

All for the All, my heart is Yours,
In every task Your love endures.
Through wandering thoughts, I come again,
To rest in You, my Lord, my Friend.

[Verse 2]

At times I kneel before Your throne,
A sinner judged, yet not alone.
At times I feel a Father's care,
Your mercy meets me everywhere.

[Chorus]

All for the All, my heart is Yours,
In every task Your love endures.
Through wandering thoughts, I come again,
To rest in You, my Lord, my Friend.

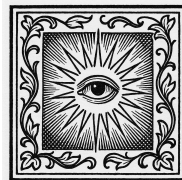
[Bridge]

Familiar grace, a holy way,
Your presence near in work or play.
Till habit grows, till love is free,
Your life is formed inside of me.

[Final Chorus]

All for the All, my heart is Yours,
In every task Your love endures.
Through wandering thoughts, I come again,
To rest in You, my Lord, my Friend.

SECOND LETTER



To the Reverend—

I have not found my manner of life described in books, though I have no uncertainty about it. Yet, for greater security, I am glad to know your thoughts concerning it.

In a recent conversation with a devout person, he told me that the spiritual life is a life of grace: it begins with servile fear, grows through hope of eternal life, and reaches its fulfillment in pure love. Each stage, he said, has its own steps by which one ascends to that blessed consummation.

I have not followed all these methods. On the contrary, I found they discouraged me by some instinct I cannot explain. So, at my entrance into religion, I resolved to give myself wholly to God as the best return for His love and to renounce everything else for His sake.

During the first year, I spent the appointed hours of devotion reflecting on death, judgment, heaven, hell, and my sins. I continued this for some years, while the rest of the day—even in the midst of business—I fixed my mind on the presence of God, whom I considered always with me and often in me.

At last, I began insensibly doing the same thing in my set times of prayer, which gave me great consolation. This practice produced in me such a high esteem for God that faith alone was enough to satisfy me in that regard.

Yet I must confess, the first ten years were filled with much suffering. I often feared I was not as devoted to God as I desired. The memory of my sins weighed heavily on me,

and the great, undeserved favors of God overwhelmed me. These became my trial and source of pain. During this time, I fell often, but just as often rose again. It seemed to me that all creation, reason, and even God Himself were against me—and only faith remained for me. At times, I feared that believing I had received such favors was a presumption, a desire to instantly reach what others attain only with great effort. At other times, I feared it was a delusion and that there was no salvation for me.

When I thought I must end my days in such struggles—though my trust in God did not fail and my faith even grew stronger—I suddenly found myself changed. My soul, which had been so troubled, entered into a profound inward peace, as though she had reached her center and place of rest.

Since then, I have walked simply before God, in faith, humility, and love, striving to do nothing and think nothing that might displease Him. I hope that when I have done what I can, He will do with me as He wills.

As for what passes in me now, I cannot put it into words. I have no pain or difficulty with my state, because I have no will but God's will, which I seek to accomplish in all things. I am so resigned that I would not pick up a straw from the ground unless it were His will, and then only for love of Him.

I have set aside all forms of devotion and prayers except those required by my station. My sole occupation is to persevere in His holy presence. I keep myself there by simple attention, a loving gaze upon God, which I may call an actual presence of God, or better, a habitual, silent, secret conversation of the soul with Him. This often fills

me with inward joys and raptures so intense that I must restrain them to prevent their outward appearance.

I am certain that my soul has been with God for over thirty years. I leave much unsaid so as not to weary you, but describing how I view myself before Him as my King is helpful.

I see myself as the most wretched of men, diseased and corrupt, guilty of every crime against my King. With heartfelt sorrow, I confess my wickedness, ask His forgiveness, and abandon myself to His mercy, to do with me as He pleases. Yet this King, full of compassion, does not punish me, but embraces me with love. He seats me at His table, serves me with His own hands, gives me the key to His treasures, and delights Himself with me unceasingly. He treats me as His favored one. This is how, occasionally, I see myself in His holy presence.

My most helpful practice is this simple attention, this passionate gaze toward God. At times I feel as attached to Him with greater sweetness than an infant at its mother's breast. If I may dare to speak it, I would call this state the bosom of God, for the indescribable sweetness I experience there.

When my thoughts wander by weakness or necessity, they are soon recalled by gentle inward motions so delightful that I am ashamed to describe them. Instead, I beg you to reflect on my great unworthiness, which you know well, rather than on the favors God grants me, so undeserving and ungrateful as I am.

My set hours of prayer are only a continuation of the same exercise. Sometimes, I place myself before God as a stone before a sculptor, asking Him to shape His image in my

soul. At other times, when I turn to prayer, my spirit is lifted without effort and rests firmly fixed in God, as in its true center.

Some accuse this state of being mere inactivity, delusion, or self-love. I confess it is a holy inactivity—and if it be self-love, it is a blessed one, for in this repose the soul is freed from the former supports it once leaned upon, which would now only hinder it.

But I cannot accept it being called delusion, for the soul in this state desires nothing but God. If I am deceived, let God Himself correct me. I desire only Him, and to be wholly His. Still, I ask your opinion, which I esteem greatly, for I have a deep regard for your reverence.

I am, in our Lord, yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 131:2 – "I have certainly soothed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child resting against his mother, My soul within me is like a weaned child."
- Isaiah 30:15 – "For this is what the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has said: 'In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength.'"
- Philippians 4:7 – "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 – "But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image

from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

- John 10:28–29 – "And I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

The Warm Lap of God

[Verse 1]

Through years of fear and heavy night,
I walked by faith, not by my sight.
Till sudden peace, so deep, so still,
Revealed the goodness of Your will.

[Chorus]

Resting in the warm lap of God,
Safe in His mercy, covered with love.
All that I am, I lay at His feet,
Joy in His presence, communion complete.

[Verse 2]

I am a sinner, yet still His guest,
Seated in splendor, fed from His rest.
Keys to His treasure placed in my hand,
Held by His kindness, I firmly stand.

[Chorus]

Resting in the warm lap of God,
Safe in His mercy, covered with love.
All that I am, I lay at His feet,
Joy in His presence, communion complete.

[Bridge]

Like stone before the sculptor's gaze,
I yield my heart to shape and raise.
His image formed, His love displayed,
In quiet trust my soul is stayed.

[Final Chorus]

Resting in the warm lap of God,
Safe in His mercy, covered with love.
All that I am, I lay at His feet,
Joy in His presence, communion complete.

THIRD LETTER



We have an infinitely gracious God who knows all our needs. I always believed He would bring you to extremity, but He will come at His own time, and when you least expect it. Hope in Him more than ever. Join me in thanking Him for the favors He grants you—especially the fortitude and patience He gives you in your afflictions. These are clear signs of His care for you. Take comfort in Him, and give thanks for everything.

I also admire Mr. ---- 's strength and courage. God has given him a good heart and a willing spirit, though he still has some attachment to the world and much of his youth. I hope the affliction God has allowed will be a wholesome remedy, causing him to look within and trust entirely in the One who goes with him everywhere.

Let him think of God as often as possible, especially in times of great danger. A simple lifting of the heart to God is enough. A brief remembrance of Him, one act of inward worship—even on the march, even with a sword in hand—is a true prayer. However short, such prayers are deeply acceptable to God. Far from weakening a soldier's courage in danger, they actually strengthen it.

Let him think of God as much as possible, and gradually accustom himself to this small but holy exercise. No one will notice it, and nothing is easier than to repeat these brief acts of inner adoration many times a day. Please encourage him to practice this, for it is most fitting and necessary for a soldier who is exposed to danger and death daily.

I trust that God will help him and all the family, to whom I send my greetings. I remain, theirs and yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 46:1 – "God is our refuge and strength, A very ready help in trouble."
- Philippians 4:6 – "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17–18 – "Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."
- Joshua 1:9 – "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified nor dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
- Romans 12:12 – "Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer."

Lift Up Your Heart

[Verse 1]

God knows our need, His time is best,
In every trial our souls find rest.
Hope in His love, His mercy sure,
Through every storm His grace endures.

[Chorus]

Lift up your heart, a moment's prayer,
God hears your cry, He's always there.
In battle's roar or darkest night,
He is your strength, your shield, your light.

[Verse 2]

A soldier prays with sword in hand,
God's presence near in every land.
No fear can stand where faith is strong,
His Spirit lifts our hearts in song.

[Chorus]

Lift up your heart, a moment's prayer,
God hears your cry, He's always there.
In battle's roar or darkest night,
He is your strength, your shield, your light.

[Bridge]

One thought of love, one upward glance,
Can turn the tide, can change the chance.
For God is near, His power revealed,
And hearts made brave by grace are sealed.

[Final Chorus]

Lift up your heart, a moment's prayer,
God hears your cry, He's always there.
In battle's roar or darkest night,
He is your strength, your shield, your light.

FOURTH LETTER



I take this opportunity to share with you the thoughts of one of our brethren concerning the remarkable effects and continual help he receives from living in God's presence. Let both of us learn from his example.

For about forty years, ever since he entered the religious life, his constant aim has been to remain always with God —never doing, saying, or thinking anything that might displease Him. And this he has done for no other reason than pure love, because God deserves infinitely more.

He has become so accustomed to this divine presence that it brings him continual help on every occasion. For nearly thirty years, his soul has been filled with unceasing joy—so abundant at times that he has been forced to moderate it, lest it show outwardly.

If ever he is too long absent from that presence, God makes Himself feel within his soul to recall him, often when he is most engaged in outward duties. He responds faithfully to these gentle promptings, either by lifting his heart to God, by a tender and loving glance toward Him, or by words of devotion such as: *“My God, here I am, all devoted to You. Lord, make me according to Your heart.”* Then he senses, as indeed he feels, that this God of love, satisfied with such few words, rests again in the depths of his soul.

From this experience, he has gained such assurance that God is always present at the center of his being that he cannot doubt it under any circumstances. Imagine the contentment he enjoys, finding such a treasure always

within. He no longer searches anxiously for it—it lies open before him, and he may draw from it freely.

He often laments our blindness, pitying those who are content with so little. “God,” he says, *“has infinite treasures to bestow, but we settle for a little fleeting devotion. In our blindness, we block the flow of His grace. But when He finds a soul alive with faith, He pours His grace in torrents, which, once released, spread with overwhelming abundance.”*

Yes, we too often block this torrent by failing to value it. Let us do so no more. Let us break down the barriers that hinder His grace. Let us redeem the time we have lost, for perhaps we have little left. Death is near, and we have but one life. To lose it is to lose all.

Let's turn inward. The time is urgent—our souls are at stake. I trust you have taken such measures that you will not be caught unprepared. I commend you, for this is the one thing needful. Still, we must labor at it continually, for not to advance in the spiritual life is to fall back. But those who sail with the wind of the Holy Spirit move forward even in their sleep.

If the vessel of our soul is tossed with storms, let us awaken the Lord who rests within it, and He will quickly bring calm.

I share these good thoughts so that you may compare them with your own, and that they may rekindle your fervor should it ever grow faint. Let us both recall our first love. Let us learn from the example of this brother, little known to the world, but known to God and greatly loved by Him. I will pray for you; pray earnestly for me, who am, in our Lord,

Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- John 14:23 – "If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him."
- Revelation 2:4–5 – "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first."
- Psalm 36:8 – "They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You allow them to drink from the river of Your delights."
- Mark 4:39 – "And after waking up, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Silence! Be still!' And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm."
- Ephesians 3:16–17 – "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."

Awaken the Lord Within

[Verse 1]

For all his years his heart has sought
To think no thought that pleased Him not.
In every task, in every day,
God's presence near has led the way.

[Chorus]

Awaken the Lord within the storm,
He speaks, and the seas grow calm and warm.
A torrent of grace, a river wide,
Flows freely to those who in Him abide.

[Verse 2]

We settle for drops, though oceans wait,
Blind hearts content with moments faint.
But faith breaks the banks, and love sets free,
The flood of God's sweet majesty.

[Chorus]

Awaken the Lord within the storm,
He speaks, and the seas grow calm and warm.
A torrent of grace, a river wide,
Flows freely to those who in Him abide.

[Bridge]

Break down the walls, redeem the time,
Death's shadow falls, the call is mine.
First love restored, our souls ignite,
Carried by Spirit's wind through night.

[Final Chorus]

Awaken the Lord within the storm,
He speaks, and the seas grow calm and warm.
A torrent of grace, a river wide,
Flows freely to those who in Him abide.

FIFTH LETTER



Today, I received two books and a letter from Sister ----, who is preparing to enter the profession. For this reason, she asks for the prayers of your holy community, especially yours. She seems to place much trust in them, so please do not disappoint her. Ask God that she may offer her vows with her eyes fixed only on His love, and with a firm resolution to be wholly devoted to Him. I will send you one of the books, which speaks about the presence of God—a subject that, in my opinion, contains the whole of the spiritual life. It seems to me that whoever faithfully practices it will soon grow spiritual.

For this practice to be rightly kept, the heart must be emptied of all else, for God will have the heart to Himself alone. He cannot fully possess it without removing everything else, and He cannot act within it as He wills unless it is left open for Him.

No life in the world is sweeter and delightful than continual fellowship with God. Only those who practice it can truly understand. Yet this should not be done for pleasure's sake, but out of pure love, because it is God's will.

If I were a preacher, I would preach above all else the practice of the presence of God. If I were a spiritual director, I would urge everyone to pursue it, so necessary and so simple do I find it.

If only we knew how greatly we need God's grace and help, we would never turn away from Him—not even for a moment. Believe me: resolve immediately and wholeheartedly never again to willfully forget Him.

Determine to spend the rest of your life in His holy presence—even if, for His sake, He should choose to withhold every comfort.

Begin this work earnestly, and if you do it rightly, be sure you will soon experience its fruit. I will support you with my poor prayers. I also beg earnestly for yours, and those of your holy society, being theirs, and most particularly,

Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Matthew 22:37 – "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'"
- James 4:5 – "Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, 'He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us'?"
- Psalm 27:8 – "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'I shall seek Your face, Lord.'"
- Deuteronomy 10:12 – "Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."
- Philippians 3:8 – "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them mere rubbish, so that I may gain Christ."

Never Lose Sight of Him

[Verse 1]

Empty the heart of all but love,
Make room for Him who reigns above.
The sweetest life this world can give,
Is walking with our God to live.

[Chorus]

Never lose sight of Him, not for a moment,
Hold fast in love, though comforts fade away.
Live in His presence, steadfast and devoted,
His grace will guide you every day.

[Verse 2]

Not for delight, nor fleeting joy,
But love alone that can't be destroyed.
Resolve today, let nothing distract,
God's holy nearness keep intact.

[Chorus]

Never lose sight of Him, not for a moment,
Hold fast in love, though comforts fade away.
Live in His presence, steadfast and devoted,
His grace will guide you every day.

[Bridge]

If we but knew our constant need,
We'd never from His presence leave.
A holy gaze, a heart's intent,
In love's pure fire our days are spent.

[Final Chorus]

Never lose sight of Him, not for a moment,
Hold fast in love, though comforts fade away.
Live in His presence, steadfast and devoted,
His grace will guide you every day.

SIXTH LETTER

To the Same



I have received from Mrs. ---- the things you sent me by her. But I wonder that you have not yet shared your thoughts on the little book I sent you, which you must have received. Please commit yourself to the practice it teaches, even in your old age, for it is better late than never.

I cannot understand how religious persons can live content without practicing the presence of God. For my part, I keep myself withdrawn with Him in the depth, the very center of my soul, as much as I can. While I remain with Him there, I fear nothing. But the slightest turning away from Him is unbearable.

This practice does not weary the body much. Still, denying many small pleasures at times—even often—is fitting, even though they may be innocent and lawful. For God will not allow a soul wholly devoted to Him to take other pleasures than those found in Him alone. That is only reasonable.

Yet I do not mean that we must force ourselves harshly. No, we must serve God in holy freedom. We must go about our duties faithfully, without trouble or anxiety, gently drawing our minds back to Him whenever they wander.

However, it is essential to put all our trust in God, casting aside every other care—and even sometimes setting aside particular devotions, though they may be good in themselves. For these devotions are only means to the true end. And when, through the practice of God's presence, we are already with Him who is our end, it is needless to return to the means. Instead, we should continue our exchange of

love with Him—sometimes in praise, sometimes in adoration, sometimes in desire, sometimes in surrender or thanksgiving, or in whatever form the Spirit suggests.

Do not be discouraged if your nature resists. You must persevere, even force yourself at times. In the beginning, it may feel like wasted effort, but you must go on and resolve to continue until death, despite every difficulty.

I commend myself to the prayers of your holy society, particularly yours. I am, in our Lord,

Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 73:25 – "Whom do I have in heaven but You? And with You, I desire nothing on earth."
- Isaiah 26:9 – "At night my soul longs for You; Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently."
- Matthew 6:33 – "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you."
- Hebrews 10:36 – "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."
- Luke 9:23 – "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

Persevere in His Presence

[Verse 1]

In the depths where silence flows,
There my soul with Jesus goes.
Every breath, a prayer of love,
Draws me closer to above.

[Chorus]

Persevere in His presence, through trial and test,
In freedom of spirit, in His will find rest.
Though nature resists and the way may be long,
His grace is my refuge, His joy is my song.

[Verse 2]

Pleasures fade, their sweetness gone,
But in Christ my heart lives on.
Means may cease when the end is near,
God Himself is ever here.

[Chorus]

Persevere in His presence, through trial and test,
In freedom of spirit, in His will find rest.
Though nature resists and the way may be long,
His grace is my refuge, His joy is my song.

[Bridge]

Not wasted hours, but seeds of grace,
Each turning back to seek His face.
Till habit grows, till love is free,
And Christ is all in all to me.

[Final Chorus]

Persevere in His presence, through trial and test,
In freedom of spirit, in His will find rest.
Though nature resists and the way may be long,
His grace is my refuge, His joy is my song.

SEVENTH LETTER



I pity you greatly. It would be of great value if you could leave the care of your affairs to ----, and spend the rest of your life wholly in worshipping God. He asks no great things of us: just a little remembrance of Him now and then, a simple act of adoration, a prayer for His grace, an offering of your sufferings, a word of thanks for the favors He has given and still gives—even in the midst of troubles. Console yourself with Him as often as you can.

Lift up your heart to Him even during your meals, or when in company. The smallest remembrance is always acceptable to Him. You need not cry aloud, for He is nearer to us than we realize.

It is unnecessary to be at church for us to be with God. We may make of our own hearts a chapel where we can retire, from time to time, to speak with Him in meekness, humility, and love. Everyone can have this familiar conversation with God—some more, some less—but He knows what each can do. Let us begin, then. Perhaps He waits only for one generous resolution from us.

Take courage. Our time is short. You are nearly sixty-four, and I am almost eighty. Let us live and die with God. Sufferings will be sweet when borne with Him, but the greatest pleasures without Him will be bitter punishment. May He be forever blessed. Amen.

Accustom yourself gradually to worship Him this way: ask His grace, offer Him your heart, in the midst of your work, even moment by moment if you can. Do not bind yourself too rigidly to rules or forms of devotion, but act with a

broad confidence in God, with love and humility. Assure
---- of my poor prayers, and that I remain their servant, and
especially,

Yours in our Lord, etc.

Additional Bible References

- 1 Corinthians 10:31 – "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God."
- Psalm 145:18 – "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, To all who call on Him in truth."
- Romans 12:12 – "Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer."
- John 4:23 – "But a time is coming, and even now has arrived, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."
- Hebrews 13:15 – "Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name."

A Chapel in the Heart

[Verse 1]

Not in the church alone we stay,
But in the heart we find the way.
A whispered prayer, a lifted thought,
Is worship that our Lord has sought.

[Chorus]

A chapel in the heart, where God is near,
In every breath His love is clear.
Through joy or pain, through work or rest,
To live and die with God is best.

[Verse 2]

At table spread, in company,
One look to Him is melody.
No voice need cry, no shout, no song,
For He has been with us all along.

[Chorus]

A chapel in the heart, where God is near,
In every breath His love is clear.
Through joy or pain, through work or rest,
To live and die with God is best.

[Bridge]

Our years are few, the end is nigh,
But hope in Him will never die.
With courage walk, with love obey,
His presence lights the narrow way.

[Final Chorus]

A chapel in the heart, where God is near,
In every breath His love is clear.
Through joy or pain, through work or rest,
To live and die with God is best.

EIGHTH LETTER

(Concerning wandering thoughts in Prayer.)



You tell me nothing new; you are not the only one who struggles with wandering thoughts. Our minds are by nature restless and prone to roam. Yet since the will governs all our faculties, it must call them back and turn them toward God, their final end.

When the mind, through lack of careful recollection at the start of devotion, has fallen into bad habits of distraction, these become difficult to overcome. They tend to drag us back to earthly things, even against our will.

I believe one remedy is to confess this fault humbly before God. I do not advise using many words in prayer, for long speeches often lead to more distractions. Instead, place yourself in prayer before God like a mute or paralyzed beggar sitting at the gate of a rich man. Make it your chief aim simply to keep your mind in the presence of the Lord.

If your thoughts wander, do not trouble yourself too much over it. Anxiety and agitation only make the mind more unsettled. Instead, let the will quietly draw it back to God. If you continue in this way, God will surely have pity on you.

One way to make recollection in prayer easier and more peaceful is to keep your mind from wandering too far at other times. If you habitually experience God's presence during daily life, it will be much easier to remain calm in prayer or at least to return quickly when distracted.

In previous letters, I have already discussed the benefits of practicing God's presence at length. Let us take this seriously and pray for one another.

Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 46:10 – "Stop striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth."
- Ecclesiastes 5:2 – "Do not be quick with your mouth or impulsive in your heart to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore, let your words be few."
- Matthew 6:7 – "And when you are praying, do not use thoughtless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words."
- James 4:10 – "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 – "We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

Bring It Back to You

[Verse 1]

My mind is restless, prone to stray,
It wanders far, it drifts away.
But still my will will call it true,
And bring it back, O Lord, to You.

[Chorus]

Bring it back to You, O Lord,
Calm my thoughts by Your sure word.
Like a beggar at Your gate,
I will watch and I will wait.

[Verse 2]

Not many words, not speeches long,
But silence makes my spirit strong.
One lifted heart, one quiet plea,
Is prayer enough for You and me.

[Chorus]

Bring it back to You, O Lord,
Calm my thoughts by Your sure word.
Like a beggar at Your gate,
I will watch and I will wait.

[Bridge]

Each wandering step, each fleeting aim,
I lay it down in Jesus' name.
Your mercy waits, Your grace is kind,
And still You call back my mind.

[Final Chorus]

Bring it back to You, O Lord,
Calm my thoughts by Your sure word.
Like a beggar at Your gate,
I will watch and I will wait.

NINTH LETTER



I've enclosed a reply to the letter I received from ----; please deliver it to her. She seems to me full of goodwill, but she wants to run ahead of grace. One does not become holy all at once. I commend her to you. We ought to help one another, not only by advice but by good example. Please also keep me informed about her from time to time and whether she remains fervent and obedient.

Let us often remind ourselves that our one true business in this life is to please God, and that everything else is folly and vanity. You and I have lived about forty years in religion. Have we truly spent them loving and serving God, who called us to this state by His mercy, and for that very purpose?

I am filled with shame and confusion when I reflect—on the one hand, on the great favors God has done and continues to do for me, and on the other, on how poorly I have used them, and how little I have advanced in the way of perfection.

Yet since His mercy grants us a little more time, let us begin again in earnest. Let us redeem the time we have wasted. Let us confidently return to the Father of mercies, who is always ready to receive us with love. Let us renounce, yes, generously renounce, everything that is not Himself—for He deserves infinitely more. Let us think of Him constantly and put all our trust in Him. I do not doubt that we will soon experience the effects of this, receiving the abundance of His grace—through which we can do all things, and without which we can do nothing but sin.

We cannot escape the many dangers of life without God's continual help. Therefore, let us pray to Him continually. And how can we pray to Him without being with Him? How can we be with Him unless we think of Him often? And how can we think of Him often unless we form a holy habit of doing so?

You will say that I am constantly repeating the same thing. It is true. But this is the best and simplest method I know. Since I use no other, I advise it to all. We must first know God before we can love Him. And in order to know Him, we must often think of Him. And when we love Him, we will think of Him often, for the heart always follows its treasure.

This, my dear friend, is well worth your reflection.

I am, yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Ephesians 5:15-16 – "So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."
- Lamentations 3:22-23 – "The Lord's acts of mercy indeed do not end, For His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."
- Luke 12:34 – "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
- John 15:5 – "I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

- Hebrews 4:16 – "Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need."

Redeem the Time

[Verse 1]

All these years have passed away,
Have we loved the Lord each day?
Mercy calls, the time is near,
Let us serve with holy fear.

[Chorus]

Redeem the time, begin again,
Return to the Father who calls us in.
With grace abundant, our hearts refined,
Our treasure in heaven, our joy divine.

[Verse 2]

Shame may rise, confusion too,
Yet His mercies still are new.
Renounce the world, its fleeting claim,
Seek the Lord, exalt His name.

[Chorus]

Redeem the time, begin again,
Return to the Father who calls us in.
With grace abundant, our hearts refined,
Our treasure in heaven, our joy divine.

[Bridge]

We know, we love, we think of Him,
Through habit formed, His light grows dim?—
No, brighter still, His truth will shine,
The heart will follow the treasure divine.

[Final Chorus]

Redeem the time, begin again,
Return to the Father who calls us in.
With grace abundant, our hearts refined,
Our treasure in heaven, our joy divine.

TENTH LETTER



I have struggled to write to Mr. ----, and I do so now only because you and Madam ---- have urged me to. Please write the directions and send them to him.

I am very glad of the trust you place in God. May He increase it in you more and more. We can never have too much confidence in so good and faithful a Friend—One who will never fail us, neither in this life nor in the life to come.

If Mr. ---- learns from the loss he has suffered, and puts all his trust in God, He will soon give him another friend, more powerful and more ready to help him. God turns human hearts as He pleases. Perhaps Mr. ---- was too attached to the one he has lost. We ought indeed to love our friends, but never so as to lessen the love due to God, which must always come first.

Remember, I beg you, what I have so often recommended: think often of God—by day and night, in your work and even in your leisure. He is always near and with you; do not leave Him alone. You would think it rude to leave a friend sitting alone if he came to visit you; why then should we neglect God?

Do not forget Him, but think on Him continually. Adore Him without ceasing. Live and die with Him. This is the glorious calling of a Christian. Indeed, it is our very profession. If we do not yet know it, we must learn it.

I will help you with my poor prayers and remain, in our Lord,
Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Proverbs 18:24 – "A person of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
- Psalm 73:28 – "But as for me, the nearness of God is good for me; I have made the Lord God my refuge, So that I may tell of all Your works."
- John 15:13–14 – "Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you."
- Hebrews 13:5 – "I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:10 – "Who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him."

Never Leave Him Alone

[Verse 1]

A faithful Friend is near at hand,
Who holds the hearts of every man.
He gives, He takes, His ways are best,
In Him my weary soul finds rest.

[Chorus]

Never leave Him alone, He is with you always,
By night and by day, in work and in praise.
Think often of Him, adore at His throne,
Live and die with the Lord—never leave Him alone.

[Verse 2]

Friends may depart, but He remains,
A constant love through loss and pain.
Our hearts must rest in God above,
The first, the greatest, truest love.

[Chorus]

Never leave Him alone, He is with you always,
By night and by day, in work and in praise.
Think often of Him, adore at His throne,
Live and die with the Lord—never leave Him alone.

[Bridge]

How rude to leave a guest who came,
Yet God is near—do not profane.
Stay by His side, His presence own,
With every breath, be His alone.

[Final Chorus]

Never leave Him alone, He is with you always,
By night and by day, in work and in praise.
Think often of Him, adore at His throne,
Live and die with the Lord—never leave Him alone.

ELEVENTH LETTER



I do not pray that you may be delivered from your pains, but I pray earnestly that God would grant you strength and patience to bear them as long as He wills.

Find your comfort in Him who holds you fastened to the cross. He will release you when He knows the time is right. Happy are those who suffer with Him. Train yourself to suffer in that way, and seek His strength to endure as long and much as He deems necessary.

The people of the world do not understand these truths. It is no wonder, for they suffer only as natural men and not as Christians. They see sickness merely as a burden to nature, and not as a gift from God; and so, viewing it only in that light, they find in it nothing but grief and distress. But those who see sickness as coming from God's hand, as the fruit of His mercy, and as a means He uses for their salvation—these often discover in it a surprising sweetness and consolation.

Convince yourself of this: God is often nearer to us in sickness than in health, and His presence with us then is more powerful and effective. Trust in no other Physician. I believe He has reserved your healing for Himself. Put all your confidence in Him, and you will soon find the fruit of it in your recovery—something we often delay by placing greater trust in medicine than in God.

Whatever remedies you use will only prosper as He permits. When pains come from God, He alone can remove them. And often He sends bodily sickness to cure the illness of the soul. Find your comfort in the sovereign Physician of both soul and body.

Be content with the state in which God has placed you. However blessed you may think me, I envy you. To suffer pain with God would be paradise to me; but to enjoy pleasure without Him would be hell. My only consolation would be to endure something for His sake.

Soon I must go to God. What comforts me in this life is that now I see Him by faith—and I see Him in such a way that sometimes I might say, “I no longer only believe; I see.” I feel what faith teaches, and in that assurance, and in that practice of faith, I am resolved to live and die with Him.

Continue, then, always with God. In Him alone you will find support and comfort in affliction. I will beseech Him to be with you. I send you my service.

Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- 2 Corinthians 12:9 – “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”
- Romans 8:18 – “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”
- Psalm 34:18 – “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
- James 5:15 – “And the prayer of faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up;

and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him."

- Philippians 1:29 – "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf."

Suffering with My God

[Verse 1]

Hold me fast upon the cross,
Through the pain, through the loss.
If You will it, let me stay,
Till Your hand removes the day.

[Chorus]

Suffering with my God is sweet,
At His feet my soul complete.
Pleasures without Him turn to hell,
But with His love my soul may dwell.

[Verse 2]

Worldly hearts see only pain,
But mercy shines through every strain.
The sovereign Healer near me stands,
With soul and body in His hands.

[Chorus]

Suffering with my God is sweet,
At His feet my soul complete.
Pleasures without Him turn to hell,
But with His love my soul may dwell.

[Bridge]

By faith I see, by grace I know,
The truth that makes my spirit glow.
“I no longer only believe, I see,”
Christ lives in me, eternally.

[Final Chorus]

Suffering with my God is sweet,
At His feet my soul complete.
Pleasures without Him turn to hell,
But with His love my soul may dwell.

TWELFTH LETTER



If we were well accustomed to the practice of God's presence, all bodily sickness would be greatly eased by it. God often allows us to suffer a little to purify our souls and to compel us to remain close to Him.

Take courage: offer Him your pains continually, and ask Him for strength to endure them. Above all, form the habit of speaking often with God, and forget Him as little as possible. Adore Him even in your infirmities; offer yourself to Him repeatedly; and in the height of your suffering, ask Him humbly and tenderly, as a child to his father, to make you conformed to His holy will. I will do my part to support you with my poor prayers.

God has many ways of drawing us to Himself. Sometimes He hides Himself, but faith alone—which never fails in our hour of need—must be our support, and the ground of our confidence, which must rest wholly in Him.

As for myself, I do not know what God intends for me. Yet I am always happy. While the whole world suffers, I—who deserve the harshest correction—am filled with such continual and great joy that I can hardly contain it.

I would gladly ask God to give me a share of your sufferings, except that I know my weakness. If He left me to myself for even one moment, I would be the most miserable of men. And yet I cannot understand how He could leave me at all, for faith gives me as certain a conviction as sight itself that He never forsakes us until we first forsake Him. Let us, then, be careful not to leave Him.

Let us always remain with Him. Let us live and die in His presence. Pray for me, as I pray for you.

I am, yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 – "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."
- Romans 5:3–4 – "And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope."
- Hebrews 13:5 – "I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you."
- Deuteronomy 31:8 – "And the Lord is the one who is going ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not desert you or abandon you. Do not fear and do not be dismayed."
- Psalm 73:26 – "My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Never Forsaken

[Verse 1]

When sickness comes and trials stay,
God calls me near, He shows the way.
In pain I whisper, "Lord, I'm Yours,"
And find His mercy still endures.

[Chorus]

Never forsaken, never alone,
God is my refuge, my heart is His home.
Through joy or sorrow, through night or day,
His presence guides me all the way.

[Verse 2]

A child I come, my will resigned,
To match my heart with His divine.
Though weak I am, His grace is near,
In faith I stand, without a fear.

[Chorus]

Never forsaken, never alone,
God is my refuge, my heart is His home.
Through joy or sorrow, through night or day,
His presence guides me all the way.

[Bridge]

Though He may hide, His love is sure,
By faith I walk, by faith secure.
He holds me fast, I will not roam,
In life, in death, my Lord, my home.

[Final Chorus]

Never forsaken, never alone,
God is my refuge, my heart is His home.
Through joy or sorrow, through night or day,
His presence guides me all the way.

THIRTEENTH LETTER



To the Same

I am grieved to see you suffer so long. What comforts me and softens my concern for your pain is that it is a sure sign of God's love toward you. You will bear it more easily if you see it in that light.

In your case, I believe you should set aside human remedies and entrust yourself entirely to God's providence. Perhaps He waits only for that act of complete resignation and perfect trust to bring you healing. Since medicine has so far failed and your condition worsens, it is no presumption to abandon yourself to His care and expect everything from Him.

As I wrote before, God sometimes permits bodily sickness to heal the illness of the soul. Take courage, then: turn necessity into virtue. Do not ask Him to free you from your pain, but rather to give you strength to bear it resolutely, for love of Him, and for as long as He wills.

Such prayers may seem difficult to our nature, but they are most pleasing to God, and sweet to those who love Him. Love makes suffering light, and when we love God, we can endure for His sake with joy and courage. I urge you, then: comfort yourself in Him, the only true Physician of every malady. He is the Father of the afflicted, always ready to help us. He loves us far more than we can imagine. Love Him, then, and seek no consolation elsewhere. I trust you will soon find His comfort.

Farewell. I will support you with my poor prayers, and I will remain always, in our Lord,

Yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- Psalm 103:2–3 – "Bless the Lord, my soul, And do not forget any of His benefits; Who pardons all your guilt, Who heals all your diseases."
- Isaiah 41:10 – "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand."
- Romans 5:3–5 – "We also celebrate in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit."
- 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 – "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
- 1 Peter 5:10 – "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

Love Sweetens Pains

[Verse 1]

The trials weigh, the nights are long,
Yet love of God will make you strong.
Resign your heart, your fears release,
In His good will is perfect peace.

[Chorus]

Love sweetens pains, and sorrow fades,
Strength is found where trust is laid.
The Father heals, His hand sustains,
In His embrace, love sweetens pains.

[Verse 2]

No cure in man, no balm on earth,
But Christ redeems with greater worth.
The Great Physician's touch is near,
His mercy dries the mourner's tear.

[Chorus]

Love sweetens pains, and sorrow fades,
Strength is found where trust is laid.
The Father heals, His hand sustains,
In His embrace, love sweetens pains.

[Bridge]

Not freedom sought, but strength to bear,
The cross we lift becomes our prayer.
His steadfast love will never fail,
Through storm and fire His grace prevails.

[Final Chorus]

Love sweetens pains, and sorrow fades,
Strength is found where trust is laid.
The Father heals, His hand sustains,
In His embrace, love sweetens pains.

FOURTEENTH LETTER



To the Same

I give thanks to our Lord for having granted you some relief, as you desired.

For myself, I have often been close to death, yet never have I been so satisfied as in those moments. For then I did not pray for relief, but only for strength to suffer with courage, humility, and love. Ah, how sweet it is to suffer with God!

However great the sufferings, receive them with love. To suffer and to be with Him is paradise. And if in this life we wish to taste the peace of paradise, we must learn a constant, humble, and loving fellowship with Him. We must guard our spirits against wandering away from Him for any cause. We must make of our hearts a spiritual temple in which to adore Him without ceasing. We must watch ourselves continually, lest we do, say, or think anything that might displease Him. When the mind is thus fixed on God, suffering becomes full of sweetness and consolation.

I know the beginning of such a life is hard, for it must be lived purely by faith. But though it is difficult, we also know that by the grace of God all things are possible—and He never refuses His grace to those who ask for it sincerely. Knock, persevere in knocking, and I assure you, He will open to you in His time, and will grant you all at once what He has withheld for many years.

Farewell! Pray to Him for me, as I pray to Him for you. I hope to see Him soon.

I am, yours, etc.

Additional Bible References

- James 1:2–4 – "Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."
- Matthew 7:7–8 – "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened."
- 2 Corinthians 4:17 – "For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."
- Psalm 84:10 – "For a day in Your courtyards is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness."
- Philippians 4:13 – "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Sweet to Suffer with God

[Verse 1]

At death's dark door I've often lain,
Yet found in Christ a sweeter gain.
No prayer for ease, but strength to stay,
With courage walk the narrow way.

[Chorus]

Sweet to suffer with God, my King,
Through pain and loss His praise I sing.
In His presence paradise starts,
He makes His temple in our hearts.

[Verse 2]

Guard the soul from wandering far,
Adore Him where His mercies are.
A humble gaze, a constant prayer,
Turns every grief to glory there.

[Chorus]

Sweet to suffer with God, my King,
Through pain and loss His praise I sing.
In His presence paradise starts,
He makes His temple in our hearts.

[Bridge]

By faith I walk, though dark the night,
His grace will give my soul its sight.
Knock, and the door shall open wide,
The Lord Himself my strength, my guide.

[Final Chorus]

Sweet to suffer with God, my King,
Through pain and loss His praise I sing.
In His presence paradise starts,
He makes His temple in our hearts.

FIFTEENTH LETTER



To the Same

God knows best what we need, and everything He does is for our good. If we truly understood how much He loves us, we would be ready to receive from His hand both the sweet and the bitter with equal indifference, for everything that comes from Him is pleasing. Even the heaviest afflictions seem unbearable only when we see them in the wrong light. But when we recognize them as given by God's hand—when we see that it is our loving Father who humbles and chastises us—our sufferings lose their sting and even become a source of consolation.

Let our chief work be to know God. The more we know Him, the more we will desire to know Him. And since knowledge is usually the measure of love, the deeper and wider our knowledge of Him becomes, the greater our love for Him will be. If our love for God were truly great, we would love Him equally in both pains and pleasures.

Let us not be content with loving Him only for the favors we feel, however lofty they may be. Such favors, however great, cannot bring us as close to Him as a single act of faith can. Let us, therefore, seek Him often by faith. He is within us—let us not look for Him elsewhere. If we love Him alone, should we not be ashamed if we give our hearts to trifles that do not please Him, and perhaps offend Him? Beware, for such trifles may one day cost us dearly.

Let us begin at last to give ourselves to Him with sincerity. Let us empty our hearts of everything else, for He desires to possess them alone. Beg this grace from Him. If we do all

we can on our side, we will soon see the change in us for which we long.

I cannot thank Him enough for the relief He has given you. By His mercy, I hope to see Him face to face soon. Let us continue to pray for one another.

I am, in our Lord, yours, etc.

[NOTE: Brother Lawrence died within a week of sending this letter.]

Additional Bible References

- Romans 8:28 – "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."
- Philippians 3:8 – "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."
- John 14:23 – "If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him."
- Hebrews 12:6 – "For the Lord disciplines the one whom He loves, and He disciplines every son whom He receives."
- 2 Corinthians 5:7 – "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

The Sweet and the Bitter

[Verse 1]

God knows our need, His love is sure,
Through pain or joy His ways endure.
The bitter cup, the gentle grace,
Are tokens of His warm embrace.

[Chorus]

The sweet and the bitter, both from His hand,
Are gifts of a Father, wise and grand.
By faith we receive, by love we stand,
The sweet and the bitter, both from His hand.

[Verse 2]

To know our God is love's delight,
Each glimpse of Him makes faith burn bright.
No favor felt, no gift so high,
As faith that sees with inward eye.

[Chorus]

The sweet and the bitter, both from His hand,
Are gifts of a Father, wise and grand.
By faith we receive, by love we stand,
The sweet and the bitter, both from His hand.

[Bridge]

Cast out the trifles, vain and small,
Let Christ alone be all in all.
Empty the heart, His love shall fill,
Our lives conformed unto His will.

[Final Chorus]

The sweet and the bitter, both from His hand,
Are gifts of a Father, wise and grand.
By faith we receive, by love we stand,
The sweet and the bitter, both from His hand.